Government Policy for Development of Agro and Rural Industries

888. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the Government's Policy to develop Agro and Rural Industries;

(b) details of steps taken in this regard during the last three years; and

(c) how far these industries have helped in improving the rural poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES AND AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Agro and rural industries have been identified as a thrust area for Government support in terms of technology and skill upgradation, identification of viable shelf of projects and promotion of such industries through cluster approach. There already exist specific institutions such as the Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) for essential oil industry, Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic plants and Regional Research Laboratories for providing advisory services in the area of food processing industries and essential oils. Apart from this, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission makes special efforts to assist agro and rural industries under various schemes, including the Margin Money Scheme, which has resulted in creation of rural employment to the tune of 44.44 lakh as of 31.03.1999. Moreover, KVIC also assists in setting up Common Facility Centres and artisan clusters for the promotion of agro rural industries.